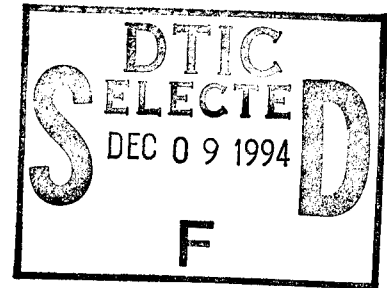


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Hollow Force: Scare or Dare?



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HOLLOW FORCE: SCARE OR DARE?

ABSTRACT

LT COLONEL POLLY PEYER

As the defense drawdown continues, there is a deep-seated concern about the readiness of military forces. Many leaders in Congress, Department of Defense, and the Services remember the turbulent era in the 1970s when the military was characterized as a 'hollow force.' In this context a 'hollow force' implies "giving the appearance of readiness when in fact, the capability is really not there."

This paper studies the history of the 'hollow force' of the 1970s and reflects on the potential for hollowness again in the 1990s. The debate focuses on the potential of hollowness as a *scare* or a *dare*. If hollowness is a *scare*, it suggests an inevitability of unreadiness which will occur regardless of actions taken to avoid it. Conversely, if hollowness is a *dare* it presents a challenge which decision-makers can overcome if they take proactive measures.

In the final analysis, there are four proactive measures which leaders must take to avoid another hollowness. These include developing better predictive systems to analyze indicators leading to hollowness; streamlining the infrastructure to do away with overhead costs and redundancy; planning defense drawdown cuts which leave remaining units well supported; and emphasizing integrity and honesty.

World events and technology have changed the face of warfare. One thing has not changed--future military forces will still require readiness support. During the defense transition, we may face temporary shortages and slight declines in readiness. We should not allow this to *scare* us into inaction. The real challenge--the *dare*--is to ensure military readiness in the next millennium.

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"Freedom is a wonderful thing.
But you can't eat it. You can't wear it.
You can't spend it. And it won't keep you warm."

Admiral David E. Jeremiah,
Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff¹

INTRODUCTION

As the midnight deadline approached, the Navy Commander in charge of supply aboard the aircraft carrier *NIMITZ* rechecked the figures he would submit on the Aircraft Material Readiness Report (AMRR). He knew the logistics readiness center would brief the report at the Navy Supply Systems Command the following morning. The AMRR was in a sense a report card. He also knew his requisitions received the highest precedence because *NIMITZ* was on deployment in the Mediterranean heading toward the Indian Ocean in response to a build-up of tensions in Iran. But a high priority just wasn't good enough. He was showing over 600 requisitions of which 90 represented "downing gripes" meaning the aircraft could not fly. He realized not much could be done to relieve the situation. In better times the number of requisitions averaged 20 a week, but he instinctively knew the wholesale stock in the depot was at a negative level. With a sigh of resignation, he initialed the report and handed it over to the technician for transmittal.²

Half a continent away, the Army Lieutenant Colonel pulled into the German rest stop along the Autobahn. There he joined his battalion's convoy which was traveling as part of the 3rd Infantry Division. They were enroute to a training exercise which would simulate a combined allied attack against the Warsaw Pact countries. As he watched the Sergeant First Class approach his jeep, he sensed from the Noncommissioned Officer's expression that the news would not be good. This was the third stop of the day and at each one previously, more vehicles had broken and stayed behind to wait for repair parts and mechanics to work them. Of the original 150 vehicles, he had already left 35 of them behind. As he suspected, the sergeant reported that 12 more

were unable to continue with the convoy. The colonel had no other recourse than to instruct the sergeant to remain with the disabled vehicles while the rest of the convoy proceeded toward its destination.

Back in the United States, the Air Force Lieutenant walked between the rows of F-4 aircraft ready for the next morning's launch. It had been a tough week preparing for the deployment from Texas to Germany. The 12 aircraft now ready to fly were in operational status at the expense of 6 other aircraft which were stripped of parts. The word her mechanics used to describe the repair actions seemed more than appropriate--cannibalization. At least the aircraft were ready. What bothered her more were the technicians who would accompany the squadron on the 30 day exercise. Unable to reach the 85 percent minimum authorization for people, even after scouring the other two maintenance squadrons, she resorted to accepting technicians at least two skill levels below the necessary requirement. Her only hope was that the mechanics were well-trained and motivated enough to keep the aircraft in good shape for the next month.

What was going on here? The time was late in the 1970s. The phrase "hollow force" had not yet been invented, but the military was facing a crisis. Units were barely able to meet their mission requirements; some could not even achieve minimum readiness status. By 1980, the military services were struggling to recruit and retain people while keeping equipment in operational status. During this time the Army Chief of Staff, General Meyer first spoke of the "hollow Army" as he described such conditions to the U.S. Congress. As we move forward in time to 1994, some feel we are staring in the face of the same potential for hollowness. The big question is whether the potential is so alarming that it should *scare* us or whether it is a challenge so captivating that it should *dare* us. 'Hollow force': Scare or Dare?

This paper looks at the potential for hollowness. Its intention is to discover whether a hollow force is an inescapable conclusion during and after the defense

drawdown--in other words is it a threat so alarming that it should *scare* us into resigning ourselves to it? Or conversely, does the hollow force potential present a challenge which will *dare* the military to confront it? Chapter One defines 'hollow force,' describes its characteristics, and discusses research methodology. Chapter Two gives a historical glimpse. Chapters Three and Four are the backbone of the study--the *scare* and the *dare*. Chapter Three deals with the validity of the *scare*. How does each of the services view the potential *scare*? What are the indicators which tell us our state of readiness? Chapter Four looks at the challenges which *dare* us to do something about hollowness. Again, how does each of the services view the impending *dare* offered to them? What are the challenges other decision makers see? Chapter Five formulates conclusions and makes recommendations. Here's where we decide whether 'hollow force' is a *scare* or a *dare*.

"It is a doctrine of war not to assume the enemy will not come,
but rather to rely on one's readiness to meet him;
not to presume that he will not attack, but rather to make one's self invincible."

Sun Tzu³

"...having a cavity...being concave...deeply recessed
...without substance...without validity...echoing"

The American Heritage Dictionary
Definition of *Hollow*⁴

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS A 'HOLLOW FORCE?'

To understand the implications of a 'hollow force,' this chapter develops reference points by defining the term and looking at its characteristics. Also, in describing my research methodology, I'll show how widespread the concern about it has grown. This chapter sets the stage for later discussions on the potential *scare* or challenging *dare* in facing a 'hollow force.'

DEFINITION. Although 'hollow' is a common word it carries special meaning when used to describe a military state of readiness. The dictionary definition of "without substance" comes closest to describing what military 'hollow' means. Mark Goldstein, a Senate Governmental Affairs Committee staffer, gave an Army definition: "an organization that seemed whole from the outside but lacked the wherewithal to accomplish its missions."⁵ Seven years ago, Lawrence Korb defined 'hollow force' as "tanks, ships and planes without the personnel or spare parts to keep them running."⁶ For this study, the following definition suffices: *giving the appearance of readiness when in fact, the capability is really not there.*

More complicated than developing a single definition is agreeing to a set of characteristics which include all the elements of 'hollow force.' General Sullivan, the Army Chief of Staff, spoke of quality soldiers and leaders, training, and equipment. He stressed that "the litmus for determining whether America's Army is approaching hollowness is increasingly more complex."⁷ General Meyer, a former Army Chief of

Staff who first coined the phrase in the 1980's, talked almost exclusively of personnel strength in his first references to 'hollow force.'⁸ There are numerous elements which combine to describe a 'hollow force.' This study groups them into two elements--people and equipment.

People. This is the number one resource. Issues related to people include:

- ***Recruiting quality people.*** The services are adamant that they must maintain the standards of high school education and mental category recruiting.
- ***Retaining quality people.*** At reenlistment time, quality people look for opportunity. To keep good people, the services defend entitlements in their budgets.
- ***Quality of Life.*** Facilities, environment, assignment rotation, and deployments become major issues because they affect morale and effectiveness.
- ***Training.*** People learning the basic skills need to practice them in realistic scenarios. This training requires steaming days, tank time, and flying hours.
- ***Leadership.*** This is the key to success. Good leadership contributes to teamwork, unit cohesion, high morale, and reliable mid-level decision making.

Equipment. This is a combination of assets and their support systems:

- ***Modernization.*** Plans include both replacement (the advanced tactical fighter) and upgrade programs (installing night vision systems on tanks).
- ***Research and Development.*** Long-term investment requires research into future technology. As equipment becomes obsolete, R&D provides the next step.
- ***Spares.*** Weapon systems need logistical support which is customer oriented, efficient, and timely. Maintenance and repair capability relies on this support.

People and equipment play in maintaining readiness. Both must be balanced to prevent a 'hollow force.' We must continue to recruit, retain, and train quality people and provide them with quality of life programs. At the same time, we must make sure equipment is modernized and supported. All these elements combine to make a ready force. Their absence creates a 'hollow force.'

METHODOLOGY. I based this study on extensive search of government documents, journals, articles, and publications which referenced the 'hollow force' of the 1980s. Additionally, I conducted a number of personal interviews with prominent senior leaders, government officials, and scholars. The two research parts--literature search and interviews--blended nicely. Among my sources are:

Background Material. Articles; defense budgets; congressional authorization and appropriation bills; reports, studies, and briefings done by Senator McCain, Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; perspectives of General Meyer, retired Army Chief of Staff; and Congressional witness statements.

Interviews. Responses to interview questions (Appendix A) gleaned from historical sources, decision makers including congress, and all the services. Among those who contributed were: General Meyer; Drs. Johns and Gropman from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; representatives from Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; the Department of Defense; and Congressional staffers.

'Hollow force' is not just a passing phrase. Experts from all areas are searching for ways to measure readiness, develop budgets, and formulate plans which support national and military objectives. Through research and interviews, I became aware of the fierce commitment of our leaders in their battle to keep defense a viable instrument of power. I present these findings to contribute to the debate about 'hollow force.'

"We must have an O&M level which supports
our personnel, our training, our equipment maintenance,
and the other requirements that are vital to maintaining readiness."

General Carl Mundy
Commandant of the Marine Corps⁹

¹ David E. Jeremiah, "Adm. Jeremiah Outlines Implications of New Post Cold War Strategy," Tactical Technology, 25 Dec 91: V1, No7.

² Don Havens, Lt Commander, U.S. Navy, Student Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Personnel Interview, 7 March 1994.

³ Samuel B.Griffith, Trans., Sun Tzu: The Art of War, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p114.

⁴ William Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company,1976).

⁵ Mark L. Goldstein and Timothy B. Clark, "Hollow Government II," Government Executive, Feb 92, p10.

⁶ Fred Hiatt, "Pentagon Ex-Defender Turns Critic: Korb, on Hill, Says Budget Plan Poses Risk of 'Hollow' Forces," The Washington Post, 26 Feb 86, A17.

⁷ Gordon R. Sullivan, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, Letter to Honorable Ike Skelton, U.S. House of Representatives, 8 Oct 93.

⁸ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Interview with the Pentagon Press Group, 13 Jun 80," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Dept of the Army, 1983), p98.

⁹ Carl Mundy, General, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Witness at Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on the FY94 Defense Authorization, 19 May 93.

"We cannot escape history.
We will be remembered in spite of ourselves."

President Abraham Lincoln
Quoted by General Colin Powell
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff¹

CHAPTER TWO

LOOKING BACK

Turn the clock back 20 years. The Vietnam War was drawing to an end. The country was in a state of transition--economically, politically, socially, and militarily. During this time the phrase 'hollow force' began to surface. It was actually a term which came from the 'hollow Army' described by General Meyer, the Army Chief of Staff. Today, the references to 'hollow force' revert to this earlier time when the military forces "had a lack of readiness that was very apparent to anyone who was in the service."² Since the current debate on 'hollow force' uses the 1970s as its reference point, its historical context becomes relevant. This historical perspective has three aspects: the domestic environment, the contributing factors, and the wake-up call.

THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT. In the mid 1970s the U.S. was recovering from the Vietnam War. Congress eliminated the military draft in 1972 and the last draftee entered service in 1973. By 1974, the military was an "all-volunteer force." Fiscal Year (FY) 79 was the lowest military budget year since the World War II drawdown and military pay lagged behind civilian wages by 20 percent. The aftermath of Vietnam had taken its toll on military support. The following comparison of the 1970s and 1990s highlight some of the similarities and differences in the domestic environments of these two periods. For an expanded discussion of this comparison, a study done by Air Force Programs and Analyses Directorate gives an excellent detailed analysis.³

Similarities between 1970s and 1990s environment. Both of these times represent post-war drawdowns. The year 1973 saw the end of the Vietnam War and 1989 saw the conclusion of the Cold War. Both were times of economic troubles. The 1970s experienced high inflation, and the 1990s encountered slow economic growth. The international environment in both the 1970s and 1990s was unstable. In the 1970s the focus was on Soviet build up and in the 1990s it was on regional conflicts.

Differences between 1970s and 1990s environment. There are also differences between the two eras--the Air Force study calls them "flesh and blood issues."⁴ People are more dedicated now than in the 1970s. Recently, recruitment and retention rates are high whereas in the 1970s they were low. Morale and discipline are exceptional while in the 1970s they were major problems. The public supports the military in the 1990s, contrasted with the anti-military mood in the 1970s.

THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS. These similarities and differences emphasize the relevance both the past and the present. A variety of contributing factors in the 1970s indicated military readiness was declining. The two areas which provide the most visible examples are personnel and logistics.

Personnel. After the all-volunteer force began in 1974, the pay gap and erosion of benefits negatively impacted the military's ability to recruit and retain quality people. The average military wage, adjusted for inflation, dropped from \$20,000 per year in 1973 to \$14,000 by 1979. By 1979 the Army was 15,000 short of their recruiting goal⁵ and the Navy was short 20,000 petty officers.⁶ Reenlistment rates in the Army fell to 11 percent below target while in the Air Force they dropped 13 percent. The services were also having problems with quality. All of them saw a decline in recruits with high school diplomas as the number decreased from 90 to 80 percent. Quality also declined on the scores for the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) which is a scale for trainability of recruits. Traditionally, a Category I trainee is the highest while Category

IV is the lowest. In the Air Force, the percentage of trainees in Category IV increased from 1 to 9 percent and the Army found they had up to 40 percent in Category IV. At the same time, the services were having discipline problems. Air Force and Army statistics indicate that close to 12 percent of soldiers and airmen committed serious offenses, a rate up substantially from the previous rates of 2 to 3 percent.^{7 & 8} The hollowness of the 1970s was both a quantity and quality issue.

Logistics. During the 1970s, the percentage of equipment that can carry out one of their primary mission, termed Mission Capability (MC), decreased in all services. The Air Force and Navy experienced excessive downtime for aircraft. The Army had problems maintaining its tanks and other vehicles. Most of these problems were due to lack of spare parts. In many cases, the units "cannibalized" parts from one asset to another to compensate for the shortfalls. At the same time, old equipment which was pre-Vietnam retired from the inventory while new systems entered the inventory. With the lead time on spare part delivery sometimes two to three years behind initial operational capability, new systems had problems meeting MC standards. Additionally, the experience levels of maintainers were low. As a result of these logistical and personnel problems, all the services had difficulty meeting training requirements. Ships, tanks, and aircraft failed to fulfill their commitments. Without practice and training hours, units became less ready, thus more 'hollow.'

THE WAKE-UP CALL. As the services struggled through the mid to late 1970s, senior leaders began to respond to the concern about military readiness. Foremost among these was General Edward Meyer. In a 1993 National Journal article, David Morrison relates how General Meyer alerted President Carter at a Camp David meeting in the fall of 1979 by declaring, "What we have is a hollow Army."⁹ General Meyer also warned Congress and other leaders of the situation. In February 1980 he authored a "white paper" which stressed that the Army must be able to sustain itself, not to become

a 'hollow force.'¹⁰ After his testimony before Congress in 1980 he commented to the news media that, "The hollowness is in the fact that the CONUS forces are not full strength . . . Across the board, wherever you go in the United States, you have hollow units."¹¹ To David Hartman on "Good Morning America," he talked about the reasons why six out of ten units weren't combat-ready.¹² Again in February 1981 before Congress, he stressed that, "the hollow Army was not just in the context of people, but equipment as well."¹³ Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, General Meyer insisted on realigning priorities to pull the Army out of its decline.

General Meyer saw shortfalls in four areas during the 'hollow force' years: leadership, manpower, material, and doctrine.¹⁴ With these problems in mind, he continually spoke out on the need to improve readiness. By 1983, he had accomplished what he set out to do--wake up Congress. Senator Humphrey told General Meyer in February 1983, "Your statement of three years ago was alarming. In my view, it was accurate and it helped to shape events, I think, such that we have made some real progress."¹⁵ The wake-up call had been answered.

General Meyer estimates it took two to three years to turn the decline around in the right direction. Four factors contributed to the recovery: Congressional support, training reorganization, doctrinal emphasis, and cohesive integration. Congress began a "rapid infusion of 1980 and 1981 monies."¹⁶ General Maxwell Thurman worked to rectify recruiting and training deficiencies. The Army developed its AirLand Battle Doctrine. Unit cohesion became a byword; no longer were units stripped to round out other units. By the mid 1980s, the services were on the uphill climb.

"When I speak to commanders, I tell them that the army of the future is essentially what I will be charged with by history. . . The Commanders, in turn, are charged with the army of today."

General Edward C. Meyer
U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983¹⁷

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- ¹ Abraham Lincoln, Quoted by General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Witness to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 20 Mar 92, "Larger Proposed Cut Would Cripple Force," Defense Issues, Vol7, No15.
 - ² David C. Morrison, "Ringin Hollow," National Journal, 18 Sep 93, p2242.
 - ³ United States, Department of the Air Force, "Defining a 'Hollow Force': Assessing the Air Force from 1974 to 1989." A study done by the Directorate of Programs and Analyses, 27 Jul 93.
 - ⁴ Ibid.
 - ⁵ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "My Way," Washington Quarterly, 1 Jun 83.
 - ⁶ "Ringin Hollow," p2242.
 - ⁷ Robert H. Scales, Jr., Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Certain Victory, (Washington D.C.: United States Army, 1993), p7 & 15. Source for all Army statistics in this paragraph.
 - ⁸ "Defining a Hollow Force," p12-15. Source for all Air Force statistics in this paragraph.
 - ⁹ "Ringin Hollow," p2242.
 - ¹⁰ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "White Paper 1980, 25 Feb 80, Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p55.
 - ¹¹ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Interview with the Pentagon Press Group, 13 Jun 80," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p98.
 - ¹² Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Interview on Good Morning America with David Hartman, ABC-TV, 5 Dec 80," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p146.
 - ¹³ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, 4 Feb 81," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p174.
 - ¹⁴ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, Personal interview: Arlington, Va., 8 Nov 93.
 - ¹⁵ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 25 Feb 83," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p371.
 - ¹⁶ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, "Responses to Questions Submitted by a Newspaper Reporter, 8 Feb 83," Chronological Extract of Material From His Term, p340.
 - ¹⁷ Edward C. Meyer, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff 1979-1983, A Conversation With General E.C. Meyer: The Army of the Future, (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 27 Jan 81), p3.

"We are going hollow, not out of intent or deliberate neglect,
but because of a series of false economies
in each of our military services."

Senator John McCain
Republican Senator from Arizona¹

CHAPTER THREE

IS 'HOLLOW FORCE' A SCARE?

Some say 'hollow force' is a "Cassandra cry" echoing down the Washington corridors. Top military leaders, Generals Sullivan and Mundy of the Army and Marines claim, "We are at the razor's edge."² Senator John McCain of the Senate Armed Services Committee compiled a 250-page report on "Going Hollow." Clearly there is a deepening concern about military readiness. This chapter looks at the potential scare--how valid is it? Three sides of the issue help to assess the validity. First, who is sounding the alarm? Next, what are the indicators? Finally, where is the risk?

WHO IS SOUNDING THE ALARM? Most of the concerns regarding the potential for 'hollow forces' come from Congress and leaders in the Department of Defense (DoD). A third source of interest comes from previous military members. The following observations provide an assessment of what they are saying about the 'hollow force' scare.

Congress is interested. As Congress reviewed the FY94 budget request, they repeatedly focused attention on military readiness. With defense drawing down, they were concerned that the U.S. would return to their "ill-prepared state of the last decade."³ Representative John Murtha (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, sees a 'hollow force' developing again. At a Defense Writers Group breakfast in March 1993 he told reporters, "If President Clinton does not back off the nation's costly overseas deployments and find some hardware programs to cut the U.S. military will become a "hollow force" beginning in FY '95."⁴

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) became the most concerned about the degradation of military readiness. Worried about a diversion of resources and reports that the Army was siphoning off funds to pay for deployments, the committee responded with two special panel investigations into the 'hollow force' issue.

- The readiness panel, chaired by Representative Hutto (D-Fla.), found four contributors to a 'hollow force': backfiring of financial systems such as the Defense Business Operations Fund; commanders making trade-offs for upkeep of bases; saving initiatives not materializing; and adding missions such as humanitarian efforts.⁵

- A "Hollow Forces Update Committee" formed to investigate eroding readiness. The four members on the committee were Representatives James Talent (R-Mo.), John McHugh (R-N. Y.), Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.). On June 28, 1993 they sent a letter to other Congressional members stating, "Proposed defense cuts will almost certainly return us to the 'Hollow Force' of the Carter Era."⁶

Congress has some strong voices warning about 'hollow force.' They carefully monitor budget cuts and cautiously watch the defense drawdown. As yet, they do not see hard data of readiness slipping. However, they think the potential is there--as early as next year or perhaps two to three years away.

Department of Defense (DoD) is concerned. While he was Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), Les Aspin repeatedly voiced concern about the future readiness of the military. Then Deputy Defense Secretary William Perry also echoed DoD's concerns in public addresses.

In April 1993, Secretary Aspin told the Senate Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations that budget cuts must be vertical, not horizontal as they were in the 1970s. He pointed out that previously the Pentagon decided to keep the force structure, but "they would downgrade the readiness of each of them . . . [and] we're in danger of doing that in the military here."⁷ This situation in the 1970s left the services with equipment but without people or spare parts for support. The 1990s drawdown

structures a military force to meet a different type of threat. The SECDEF warned Congress that an unbalanced drawdown would cause hollowing of forces. Speaking to the 1993 graduating class at the Air Force Academy, he talked of trouble spots by comparing current statistics against those during the peak of *Desert Storm*.⁸ He used *Desert Storm* as a benchmark because it is representative of the trends in military personnel standards which have been steadily improving the last decade.

- **High School Graduates.** Currently 94 percent of recruits have a high school diploma, during *Desert Storm* it was 97 percent.

- **Enlistment Test Results.** Currently, 70 percent scored in upper half of test, at the peak of *Desert Storm* 75 percent scored in upper half.

- **Combined Factors.** Currently, 65 percent have both a high school diploma and scored high on the enlistment test, in *Desert Storm* it was 72 percent.

Deputy Defense Secretary Perry also articulated the same concerns in May 1993 at a Naval Conference where he was the keynote speaker. "If we don't spend the appropriate amounts on operations and maintenance, modernization of our forces, and technology, we will reach that conclusion and we will reach it quickly."⁹ The conclusion he was referencing was that of a 'hollow force.'

Experience Speaks. Another group monitoring the 'hollow force' threat includes retired military officials and academia. Among these are a former Army Chief of Staff and professors at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF).

Secretary Aspin appointed General Meyer to head a retired flag officer task force to look into readiness. This task force of eight former military members submitted their report in January 1994. Citing budget cuts, base closures, and troop reductions, General Meyer pointed to "pockets of unreadiness."¹⁰ General Meyer relates that he sees evidence of problems in two respects. One is that there are a variety of changes happening all at once which may tend to introduce near-term unreadiness. Some of these changes include strategy, missions, size, basing, and infrastructure. Secondly,

there are "anecdotal" indicators of problems such as shortage of career specialties and increases in operational tempo as a result of peacekeeping involvement.¹¹

Both Drs. Johns and Gropman are retired military officers now instructing at ICAF. Dr. Johns cited three indications which imply the military is headed toward a 'hollow force': over-stretched commitments, problems with recruiting and retaining quality people, and staying current with modernization. Emphasizing the importance of integrity in the validity of capability assessments, he stressed the need for senior leaders to know when to show "loyal dissent" and which issues to pick.¹² Dr. Gropman also spoke critically of the direction in which the military is headed. He emphasized that personnel programs are most important. Among the worrisome factors he considered detractors are poor pay and allowances, loss of prestige, and officers becoming careerists.¹³

Experienced leaders are apprehensive about the future of military readiness. They have first-hand knowledge of the consequences of a 'hollow force.' Their wisdom and insights are essential ingredients in the assessment of readiness.

WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS? A variety of military units are relating anecdotal stories and a potential decline in mission capability trends. They see hints of a deterioration in readiness indicators which eventually will lead to a drop in capability rates.¹⁴ Consequently, the services are closely watching personnel and equipment indicators to monitor any "blips" in readiness.

Anecdotal Clues. In his interview with me, General Meyer mentioned anecdotal indicators. During the course of my other interviews, Congressional staffers mentioned this same notion.^{15&16} In an April 1993 Senate Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations, Senator Inouye (D-Hi) referred to conversations he heard from Air Force units about cannibalizing parts.¹⁷ An official in the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Programs, Analysis & Evaluation (PA&E) thinks the Army will experience

a decline in readiness before the other services. Because the Army force structure is too large for the dollars allotted, he sees a transfer of operating tempo dollars to pay base service bills. This will negatively impact training and unit exercises. The Navy also will encounter difficulties as they continue with a high deployment schedule. The Air Force seems to be "holding their own," except in mobility and special forces where the impact from the wear and tear of deployments is costly.¹⁸

Mission Capability Trends. If the stories of personnel and equipment shortages are surfacing, what are the mission capability trends showing? Each of the services reports growing concern regarding capability status forecasts:

- Three years ago, an Air Force study predicted drops in readiness by 1993 as a result of budget initiatives in 1990.¹⁹ These predictions did not come true. However, General McPeak, the Air Force Chief of Staff, warns that, "If current trends go unchecked, USAF mission capable rates could fall six percent by next year."²⁰

- The Army tracks its equipment readiness and supply performance quarterly. In the 3rd quarter of 1993, they experienced a slight dip in mission capability rates for systems, however the status was still above the previous year's average. They are concerned about the follow-on impacts of under funding in the FY93 and FY94 depot maintenance programs.²¹

- The Navy has not seen a decline of mission capability rates, but they are concerned about the impact of ship steaming and aircraft flying costs going over budget in Southwest Asia. Rear Admiral Gehman of the U.S. Atlantic Command testified in Congress that they are "looking for telltale signs that readiness levels are about to shift and . . . [they] are alert for any changes in standards for readiness."²²

Backlog of Maintenance. One of the "yardsticks" used to gauge readiness trends is the unfinanced depot equipment repair work. In response to a Congressional inquiry by Senator McCain, three of the service chiefs highlighted concerns about mounting depot maintenance backlogs. The FY94 budget falls short of requirements in

this area: the Air Force, Navy, and Army programs are funded at 80, 72, and 52 percent respectively.²³ These shortages have not yet affected readiness, but it will take two to three years before they cause a decline in asset availability trends.

So far, the indicators that Congress and the services are watching--people and equipment readiness--have not shown an unacceptable decrease. The anecdotal comments are mostly warnings and projections. Everyone realizes that although indicators have not shown any degradation yet, the budget cuts from 1994 and outyears may result in decreased readiness. The next two to three years will be tough and the indicators bear considerable watching.

WHERE IS THE RISK? When General Powell was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he constantly asked the question "How much is too much?" His concerns centered on the level of cutbacks which the military can absorb before they become ineffective or incapable of performing their missions. In 1992 he testified to the Senate that, "It is my obligation . . . to yell 'foul' when I feel that there is a danger that our nation's security is being placed at risk. Today, I feel that such a danger does exist, and in this view I am not alone."²⁴

The most comprehensive survey of the risks is available in a report that Senator John McCain (R-Ariz) published in July 1993. For the congressional record, he posed a series of over 30 questions to each of the four service chiefs. The following summarizes their responses to the question, "If you had to list the ten greatest risks you now face that you could end up with hollow forces by the end of the 1990s, what would these ten risks be?"²⁵ Appendices B-D provide the full text of the answers.

Marines. General Mundy wrote, "There are circumstances occasionally beyond our control which risk hollowing the force."

Navy. Admiral Kelso wrote, "The major problem we face today in terms of readiness is the dilemma of mortgaging future capability in order to ensure the present readiness of today's operating forces."

Army. General Sullivan wrote, "I believe the Army is on the razor's edge of readiness. We are already noticing some emergent adverse trends and are closely monitoring them to ensure that we do not let the Army, the best America has ever had, slip away from us."

Air Force. General McPeak wrote, "We must maintain the correct balance between force structure, modernization, and force readiness to prevent a return to the hollow force of the late 70s."

Independently, all four of the service chiefs listed people, spares and equipment readiness, and infrastructure in their top ten risks. Other common concerns were operational tempo, environment, and non-traditional roles such as humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. The commentary from senior military leaders was crystalline--the risks are compelling reasons to work hard against allowing the forces to go 'hollow.'

The evidence suggests there is indeed validity in the *scare* about 'hollow forces' and credibility among those sounding the alarm--Congress, DoD, and experienced senior leaders. These same groups are also closely watching the indicators, especially people and equipment, but have not yet seen negative trends. The service chiefs have clearly outlined the risks involved in allowing a 'hollow force' to emerge. To all it appears the *scare* is valid, however a 'hollow force' is not inevitable. The next chapter examines the *dare* which challenges the military to prevent a 'hollow force.'

"We need to be aware of the new risks of going hollow, and that simply attempting to avoid these mistakes of the 1970s will not protect us in the 1990s, or the post-Cold War era."

Senator John McCain
Going Hollow report July 1993²⁶

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- ¹ John McCain, Senator (R-Arizona), "Darts and Laurels," The Armed Forces Journal, Sep 93, p60.
 - ² "Ringling Hollow," p2242.
 - ³ Bill Gertz, "A Return to Hollow Army?" Washington Times, 18 Mar 93, SecA, P4, Col1.
 - ⁴ "Murtha Sees Hollow Military Approaching," Defense Daily, 18 Mar 93, V178, No51.
 - ⁵ Tony Capaccio, "\$2.1 Billion Added to Readiness Accounts by Hutto Subcommittee," Defense Week, 12 Jul 93, p12.
 - ⁶ Ibid, p12.
 - ⁷ Les Aspin, Honorable, Secretary of Defense, "Hearing of the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee," (Transcript by Federal News Service: Washington D.C., 20 Apr 93).
 - ⁸ Les Aspin, Honorable, Secretary of Defense, "Future Defense Posture Calls for Reduced Forces but Not Readiness," Reserve Officers Association National Security Report, Jul 93, p27.
 - ⁹ William J. Perry, "Shrinking the Defense Infrastructure," Center for Naval Analyses Annual Conference, May 24 and 25, 1993.
 - ¹⁰ Susanne M. Schafer, "Military Able to Fight, But Unreadiness Noted," Albuquerque Journal 19 Feb 94, pA8.
 - ¹¹ Meyer, Personal interview.
 - ¹² John H. Johns, Dr., Brig General (Army Ret), Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, Personal Interview: Fort McNair, Washington D.C., 15 Oct 93.
 - ¹³ Alan Gropman, Dr., Colonel (Air Force Ret), Department of Strategy, Personal Interview: Fort McNair, Washington D.C., 15 Oct 93.
 - ¹⁴ Peter Grier, "Behind the High Readiness Rates," Air Force Magazine, March 1994, p20.
 - ¹⁵ David Lyles, Senate Armed Services Committee Staff Official, Personal Telephone Interview: Washington D.C., 20 Dec 93.
 - ¹⁶ Mike McLaughlin, Legislative Director to Representative Talent, Personal Interview, Washington D.C., 14 Oct 93.
 - ¹⁷ Daniel Inouye, Senator (D-Hi), "Hearing of the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee," (Transcript by Federal News Service: Washington D.C., 20 Apr 93).
 - ¹⁸ Frank L. McDonald, Dr., Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Programs, Analysis, and Evaluation, Telephone interview: Washington D.C. 27 Oct 93.
 - ¹⁹ Tony Capaccio, "Spare Parts Shortages Could Leave USAF With Hollow Force," Defense Week, 3 Dec 90, v11, p49.
 - ²⁰ Brian Green, "Readiness at Risk," Air Force Magazine, Oct 93, p11.
 - ²¹ John H. Kern, Chief, Equipment and Readiness Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Logistics, Personal Interview: Washington D.C. 2 Nov 93.
 - ²² Harold W. Gehman, Jr., Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Director for Operations U.S. Atlantic Command. "Statement before the subcommittee on Military Readiness and Defense Infrastructure, Senate Armed Services Committee." 5 May 93.
 - ²³ "Ringling Hollow," p2242.
 - ²⁴ Colin L. Powell, General, U.S. Army, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, "Larger Proposed Cut Would Cripple Force," Defense Issues, 20 Apr 92, Vol7No15.
 - ²⁵ John McCain, Senator (R-Ariz), Going Hollow: The Warnings of Our Chiefs of Staff. Washington D.C., July 1993.
 - ²⁶ Ibid.

"The challenge facing the management in the Defense Department today, and the Congress, is how to sustain the quality and the readiness of our military forces in the face of this major draw-down, and in the absence of any models of success."

William Perry
Deputy Secretary of Defense¹

CHAPTER FOUR

OR IS 'HOLLOW FORCE' A DARE?

The challenge is waiting. Senior leaders in Congress and DoD are aware of the necessity to preclude the onset of a 'hollow force.' Each group of decision makers--in the services, in the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and in the Department of Defense (DoD)--keeps the challenge a priority as they work budget and force structure issues. This chapter reviews each of these perspectives and offers a commentary on the overall chances of success at responding to the *dare*. In the context of this *dare*, the military must face the challenges of recruiting quality people and maintaining mission-ready equipment to avoid a 'hollow force.'

THE SERVICES' CHALLENGE. The service chiefs began to recognize the challenge in 1989 as the post-Cold war world emerged. They've highlighted the impacts of the drawdown during briefings to Congress and discussions with DoD and others in the military. Here's how each of the services responded.

The Army. The challenge was how to restructure the Army to build a force which was smaller but just as efficient. Estimates showed that it took a reduction of about 33,000 people to save a \$1 billion. This would be equivalent to three light divisions.² In December 1993, the Army proposed to realign the Guard, Reserve, and Active component mix. To meet the challenge and avoid a 'hollow force,' the Army reduced their manpower to match a reduction in equipment. They did this to prevent the 'hollowing' that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when resources but not units were

reduced. The Army considers itself the most vulnerable service to a 'hollow force' threat. Because the 'hollow force' began in the Army, they are acutely aware of the challenge to avoid a future hollowing. The Army remains cautious but optimistic about their ability to meet the challenge.

The Navy and Marines. The Navy had two major programs to offer up--the Trident-class ballistic missile submarine and the V-22 Osprey for the Marine Corps. In the beginning they decided to delay or "stretch out" these programs but follow-on budget resolutions restored the programs. To meet the 'hollow force' challenge, the Navy now plans to retire more than 100 ships. The Navy vowed that the "key will be to maintain a balanced resource allocation over the long-term . . . and apply a healthy measure of leadership at all levels."³ Like the Army, the Navy is fully dedicated to meeting the challenge and doing all in its power to avoid a 'hollow force.'

The Air Force. Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. Sheila Widnall, is confident that the Air Force is not in danger of becoming a 'hollow force.' The way to do this is to drawdown the infrastructure in parallel with the force structure reductions. In a recent interview, Secretary Widnall stated that her number one priority is to "do everything we can to make sure it doesn't happen."⁴ The Air Force remains positive about its outlook but they are watching readiness for any downturn in trends.

All Services. To meet the challenge of avoiding a 'hollow force,' the services have assessed the trade-offs among personnel, equipment, procurement, modernization, and research requirements. They are actively involved in collecting and analyzing data on current capability and future assessments. The positive attitudes of readiness teams have established a common defense priority--to prevent a 'hollow force.'

THE JCS CHALLENGE. The JCS play a primary role in defining what the challenges are in the post-Cold War environment. Admiral Jeremiah, the former Vice Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS), iterated, "We've had enough of hollow forces in this country." He referenced a JCS study on the new military strategy which presented four challenges⁵:

The Soviet nuclear stockpile. Although the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe no longer pose a threat of general military confrontation, the U.S. needs to continue to pursue modernization of strategic systems. Since some of the former Soviet states have nuclear weapons, and it's not clear who is in charge, the U.S. still faces a challenge to deter use of nuclear weapons.

Regional military contingency operations. Not intending to become the "world's policeman," the U.S. military will still be involved in crisis situations. The challenge is to structure a military which is sized properly and able to react quickly. The "leaner" force approach has become a guideline for developing deployable units with the right type and number of personnel and equipment.

Warning periods. The joint assessment estimates the U.S. will have strategic warning if our national existence is threatened. This warning period is critical because it would give the U.S. time to mobilize forces. In order to do accomplish this, the U.S. needs to maintain a viable industrial base.

Careful reductions. By 1997, the defense budget goes down by 40% from 1985 levels, but the forces reflect a 25% reduction. With more reductions on the horizon, the goal is to avoid a 'hollowing' by maintaining a force that is "well-trained, well-led and well-cared for."⁶ Instead of merely reducing forces, the emphasis has been on also drawing down infrastructure and overhead functions.

In his congressional confirmation the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Shalikashvili, spoke of his commitment to prevent a 'hollow force.' He told the Senate Armed Services Committee that, "I think that this whole issue of

ensuring that we remain ready as we downsize is truly probably one of the great challenges during any transitional period that we're going through right now."⁷

Congress has also challenged the JCS to keep close tabs on readiness. The 1994 Defense Authorization Act requires the CJCS to provide an annual assessment for the next three years. These assessments, due on March 1 of 1994, 1995, and 1996, will focus on the military's ability to carry out its missions. The CJCS is also tasked to personally judge the risks regarding readiness and recommend courses of action.⁸ Such strong direction from Congress gives the JCS a clear challenge to face the 'hollow force' *dare*.

THE DoD REVIEW. Secretary Aspin constantly pledged to avoid a 'hollow force.' With this pledge, he presented four groups of decisions in the "bottom-up review":⁹

Force Structure. The FY95-99 budget requirements made further adjustments to active and reserve forces plus infrastructure savings related to these changes.

Infrastructure. In addition to infrastructure changes derived from force structure changes, DoD will cut headquarters and civilian personnel levels. These reductions are derived from efficiency in DoD support activities.

Modernization Programs. Savings resulted from a realigned ballistic missile defense program as well as aircraft carriers, tactical aircraft, and satellite programs. Other investment decisions reduced development and procurement programs.

Other Initiatives. Another important element of the bottom-up review was the DoD focus on preventing a "bow-wave" funding problem. Concerned that decisions today would produce large bills in the future, DoD scaled back on some programs such as the Ballistic Missile Defense Program. The bottom-up review balanced current and future defense postures and recommended decisions which were designed to prevent a 'hollow force.'

Secretary Aspin took a number of actions toward meeting the readiness challenge. With a focus on prevention rather than correction of problems, part of his solution included establishing a network to monitor and influence readiness. He established the following:

- The Senior Readiness Council chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense with participation by VCJCS and the Service Chiefs
- The Defense Science Board Readiness Task Force chaired by General Meyer with seven other retired three- and four-star flag officer members
- Plans for a Readiness Working Group chaired by Assistant Secretary for Personnel and Readiness with participation by the VCJCS, the Under Secretaries and Vice Chiefs of the Services, and selected Assistant Secretaries of Defense

Secretary Aspin's hard line to Congress has been to cut force structure rather than readiness. Calling this the vertical rather than horizontal cut, Aspin gives the example of cutting whole divisions, but making sure the ones remaining are in a high state of readiness. After Vietnam, horizontal cuts meant units were kept, but they were thinned out--creating a 'hollow force.'¹⁰ Secretary Aspin reminded Congress this was a conscientious decision at the time, and one which DoD is adamant in not doing during this drawdown. To accomplish this requires protection of the Operations and Maintenance accounts. Congress apparently concurs with this approach. Their FY94 budget enactment added funds to reduce depot maintenance backlogs and highlighted concerns about the real property maintenance backlogs. It seems all organizations--from the services through JCS, to DoD and Congress--are responding to the 'hollow force' challenge with a vengeance. Too many leaders remember the consequences of the 'hollowing' in the 1970s and 1980s.

RESEARCH RESULTS. There are some intangible forces at work in the 'hollow force' debate. Digesting the reports, the pledges, and the vows regarding the challenge, here are a few observations:

Attitudes are proactive. Unlike the environment after the Vietnam War, the current support for the military runs high. Congress is deeply involved in the desire to prevent the 'hollow force' syndrome. The general public has an awareness of the complexity of military commitments. In the glow of the 'victory' from *Desert Storm*, there is a recognition of the importance for a strong military. Defense leaders are vocal in their message--don't go back to a 'hollow force'--do everything to prevent a return to earlier defense unpreparedness.

Reflection on history. Since an earlier 'hollow force' occurred such a short time ago, most of the current decision makers experienced it first-hand. This makes their commitments even stronger in preventing a recurrence. It took 15 years to rebuild the capable military which went to war against Iraq. Today's leaders want to make sure that future military forces won't be faced with the same agonizing situation. This strong motivation helps establish priorities and assess the consequences of making risky trade-offs. There seems to be more than mere rhetoric behind the concerns about a 'hollow force.' Decision makers are making plans on how to meet the challenge.

Emphasis on Reporting. The systems in use today to collect and analyze information are much more sophisticated than those 20 years ago but they provide a short-term snapshot. The services use the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) to monitor readiness, but it does not project future readiness. In the past, this unit level process provided an adequate system to track personnel and equipment status. However, decision makers need a more predictive tool. The Air Force is designing a system which will assess capability beyond the SORTS snapshot. This system, the USAF Long-Term Readiness Assessment (ULTRA), measures readiness at two different points in time--two years from the execution year and at the end of the

Fiscal Year Defense Plan (FYDP). Its purpose is to identify the warning signals or "cracks in the foundation" before the force becomes hollow.¹¹ Although the Air Force is the only service currently developing a follow-on measurement system, the other services recognize the need to continually reassess future capability.

Thus, the 'hollow force' threat appears to be decidedly more of a *dare* than a *scare*. From the services come decisions about how to downsize forces. At the JCS level, the challenges originate from the changes in military strategy regarding nuclear threats, regional involvement, industrial base, and force reduction priorities. DoD's "bottom-up review" focused on four groups of decisions: force structure, infrastructure, modernization programs, and other initiatives. As a result of studying these perspectives, this research found some common threads in the attitudes, historical reflections, and reporting systems of today. The *dare* of a 'hollow force' has challenged all levels of defense related decision making. The final chapter draws a conclusion and hypothesizes whether the *scare* or *dare* is the most probable outcome.

"Maintaining readiness is my number one priority.
Although we are taking higher risks this year,
I believe we will adequately support our national security."

Admiral Kelso
Chief of Naval Operations¹²

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- ¹ William J. Perry, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Witness to the Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, 17 Jun 93, Transcript by International News, Washington D.C.
 - ² Brendan M. Greeley, Jr., "U.S. Armed Forces Vary Means of Coping With Tight Budgets," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 20 Mar 89, p52.
 - ³ United States, Department of the Navy, "A Briefing for the Defense Science Board Readiness Task Force," 17 Jun 93.
 - ⁴ James W. Canan, "The Widnall Perspective," Air Force Magazine, Jan 94, p37.
 - ⁵ "Adm. Jeremiah Outlines Implications of New Post Cold War Strategy."
 - ⁶ Ibid.
 - ⁷ United States, Senate Armed Services Committee, "Hearing on the Nomination of General John Shalikashvili to be Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff," 23 September 1993, text not paginated.
 - ⁸ Frank Oliveri, "Aerospace World," Air Force Magazine, Jan 94, p12.
 - ⁹ Les Aspin, Honorable, Secretary of Defense, "Restructuring Forces for a New Era," Defense Issues, 14 Sep 93, Vol18, No57.
 - ¹⁰ Les Aspin, Secretary of Defense, "Future Defense Posture Calls for Reduced Forces but Not Readiness," Reserve Officers Association National Security Report, Jul 93, p25.
 - ¹¹ United States, Department of the Air Force, "Background Paper on ULTRA," HQ USAF/XOOC, Pentagon, Washington D.C., Undated.
 - ¹² Frank B. Kelso, II, Admiral, Letter to Senator John McCain, 4 Jun 93, reprinted in Going Hollow: The Warnings of Our Chiefs of Staff. Washington D.C., Jul 93.

"In sum, we are not now a hollow force.
We are working hard to ensure that reduced force structure
and funding do not translate to low readiness and a hollow Army."

General Sullivan
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army¹

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND OUTLOOK

This study posed the question whether the future of the 'hollow force' potential presented a *scare* or a *dare* to the military forces. Throughout this paper, many opinions were offered from Congress, DoD, and other senior military leaders. History of the 1970s provided us with a reference to baseline our study. Decision makers today are determined not to repeat the same mistakes which lead to 'hollow forces' 20 years ago. This summary of the *scare* or *dare* debate offers three final observations: a conclusion, four recommendations, and a future outlook.

CONCLUSIONS. To reach the conclusions, it is necessary to summarize three parts of the debate:

Cause. The biggest underlying cause for the concern about a 'hollow force' is the feeling that the defense budget is drawing down faster than commitments. In the post-Cold War, the threats have shifted from the Soviet enemy to potential regional conflicts. This change in threat generated a necessity to restructure the forces. Redefining a military force to meet current threats takes time, but the budget won't wait. The public demands a "peace dividend," and the current administration is more focused on domestic issues which also need funding. As a result, the defense budget is a lucrative target for continued reductions. Consequently, if not carefully implemented, the defense drawdown could result in lack of people or equipment which would make the services not capable of carrying out their missions.

Wide Concern. Even though the causes of a 'hollow force' seem unavoidable, the salvation is in the wide-spread support that the military has received from a variety of sources. Congress is interested and involved--something which was lacking in the 1970s. Advocates in the Congress such as Senators McCain and Glenn, Representatives Talent and Murtha, and others are aware of the 'hollow force' potential. They analyzed the defense budget authorization with a judicious perspective, always keeping readiness in mind. The strong, vocal commitments of the SECDEF as well as CJCS kept the issue on the front-burner while defending the budget. Added to the DoD and JCS focus, the service chiefs also testified about the risks and consequences of a 'hollow force' threat. These leaders have been firm in their pledge to keep readiness as the number one priority.

Scare or Dare? In the final analysis, the more likely outcome is the challenge--a *dare*. The services may experience some short-term unreadiness as the changes in force structure are implemented. But there is no hard data that points to a drastic reduction of readiness. A 'hollow force' is not inevitable. Decisions made at the highest level consider the long-term consequences of creating a 'hollow force.' Military and defense leaders have advised Congress to take heed of the lessons from the past and draw down the forces differently. There are processes and working groups in place to watch the indicators and note if trends become unfavorable such as inadequate equipment, training deficiencies, or low morale. The attitudes are skeptical, but positive. With the emphasis on readiness and the memories of earlier 'hollow forces,' the future looks more like a *dare* rather than a *scare*.

These three conclusions about the causes, the concern, and the challenge provide a quick assessment of the earlier comments in this study. The following discussion of the recommendations addresses the challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS. To meet the 'hollow force' challenge--a *dare* rather than a *scare*--there are four things which military and congressional leaders must pursue:

Better Visibility. Although systems exist to measure readiness, they are not capable of looking at the future. What JCS and the Services need is a predictive system which considers current assessments in combination with changes in budget, personnel, and mission. The Air Force is developing ULTRA which is a step in the right direction. Congress has charged CJCS with annual assessments for the next three years. Regardless of the source, a forward-looking system must be future oriented and produce a realistic appraisal of potential pitfalls and risks. Only then can the defense establishment identify corrective actions and advocate budgetary reallocations.

Streamlined Infrastructure. The Defense Management Review Decisions (DMRDs) began in 1988, even before the end of the Cold War. Their intent was to reduce redundancy and promote efficiencies in systems and processes. Much more needs to be done. Two of the most obvious programs to reduce infrastructure is through base closures and lower overhead at headquarters. Base closure efforts lag force reductions by an estimated 15 percent. Since the base closure savings will take six to seven years to realize, future decisions on more closures are critical so that the services will no longer carry the burden of supporting an infrastructure which is mismatched with its force structure. As the force structure shrinks, overhead and headquarters functions need to also be reduced. This will require a realignment of the decision-making process and should result in a decentralization of responsibility to field units. The command structure will need to eliminate multiple layers of overhead and ultimately reduce the ratio of operational population to headquarters staff. Without more aggressive changes in infrastructure and overhead, the defense budgets will not be able to keep pace with mission requirements.

Defense Planning. Secretary Aspin's point about making vertical rather than horizontal cuts is a key lesson. As the drawdown continues, remaining units must be well supported and left at full strength--both in people and equipment. Additionally, the services need to protect their operations and maintenance accounts. Because these accounts pay for training and readiness, they are critical. In a statement regarding the rapid defense budget reduction, Representative Murtha made the recommendation to either accept a lower operations tempo or to increase the budget.² Since increasing the budget is not acceptable, the services will need to adjust their operating tempos, in order to avoid 'hollow forces.' However, reducing operational tempo is a double-edged sword because, as in the 1970s, it may lead to poorly trained combat crews. The services must weigh the pitfalls of reducing training against the challenge of budget reductions and proceed with caution. Quality training is the key--although a reduced operational tempo may provide a solution, the training must be carefully planned and executed to support combat ready forces. Also in the defense planning, quality of life must remain in the foreground. Since people are the most important element of the military, strong programs to recruit and retain quality people are essential to continued readiness. Reflecting on the "lessons learned" from the 1970s, military pay must stay on par with civilian pay.

Integrity. Without integrity and honesty in reporting, the services could miss vital signs if trends did start to develop. Too often commanders rationalize shortages and play them down in order to keep their statistics high. This happened during the 'hollow force' of the 1970s and slowed down the recovery process by hiding the true status of forces. As the military enters into a period of scarce resource allocation, units must be encouraged to critically assess their capability and upchannel potential problems. They must look beyond the short-term and analyze the long-range prognosis. The lessons learned from the 1970s and 1980s taught us that hiding or filtering the bad news only delays the process and eventually compounds the situation.

These recommendations have already been recognized by many decision-makers and leaders. Actions of Congress, SECDEF, CJCS, and the service chiefs have repeatedly focused on the necessity to maintain a ready and responsive military force. There are no guarantees that a 'hollow force' will not happen. However, with the positive attitudes and support of leaders, the challenge *dares* us to shape the future.

FUTURE OUTLOOK. The year 2000 is quickly approaching. As we meet the challenges of today, we are shaping the forces of the next century. Two of the most challenging changes in military warfare will be introduced by technology and coalition warfare. With informational and technological advances, we need to think about a change in doctrine. The introduction of high technology and computer driven equipment will give future military forces a more robotic character. Wars will be fought from a distance rather than hand-to-hand. Electronic systems, precision weapons, and communication capabilities will change the employment of forces. This technology presents the same challenge as automatic weapons and tanks did to our predecessors. How we employ and support new systems will have great bearing on the readiness of the future military.

Future wars will not be fought with U.S. forces alone. Other countries will play a role as coalition forces develop. Budget constraints and limited resources will force the U.S. and other nations to combine assets for military alliances. This presents a new challenge for the military to measure readiness. In building coalition forces, the weakest link may be readiness of allied forces, not the U.S. military. In our planning, we must develop a doctrine to match this challenge. The biggest challenge is not how to prevent 'hollow forces' in the next few years, but how to ensure readiness in the next millennium.

The message is clear. The 'hollow force' debate is not over. The next two to three years are critical to the military. Decisions made this year will shape readiness in years to come. Luckily, we have dedicated, wise leaders who are watching the future and doing as much to protect it as possible. Not only the leaders, but each of us has a role in facing the future. Reporting accurately on field readiness at unit level, responding to resource allocations at command level, and developing long-range strategy at headquarters level--these are the key ingredients. Managing the drawdown carefully and matching threat with strength, we are committed to maintaining the U.S. military as a strong, viable force capable of meeting the challenges of tomorrow. Rather than letting the *scare* of a hollow force drive us into defeat, we must confront the hollow force *dare* as a challenge to the future. *Scare* or *dare*: defeat or challenge?

"To survive at the dawn of the twenty-first century
will take more than instinct.
For all of us, civilians and soldiers alike,
it will take a profound understanding of the revolutionary
new linkage between knowledge, wealth, and war."

Alvin and Heidi Toffler
War and Anti-War³

¹ Gordon R. Sullivan, General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, Letter to Honorable Ike Skelton, U.S. House of Representatives, 8 Oct 93.

² David A. Fulghum, "Congress Grows More Critical of Rapid Budget Cuts," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 22 Mar 93, p26.

³ Alvin and Heidi Toffler, War and Anti-War, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p252.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

1. Would you define or describe what a "hollow force" means to you.
2. Do you think we are headed toward a "hollow force?"
3. What are the indicators that we are headed toward a "hollow force?"
4. What are the causes of a "hollow force?" Attitude, budget, structure??
5. How do we know we've crossed the line in decision making which will lead us down the path? What's the threshold?
6. What time frame would the impact be felt? (Next Fiscal Year, within FYDP, 5-10 years??
7. Do you think we have had a "hollow force" before?? When? How does the "hollow force" threat of tomorrow compare with the historical "hollow force"?
8. What caused the previous "hollow force?" -- political, economic, strategic, impact of Vietnam? How does aftermath of Vietnam compare with Desert Storm?
9. What did we do to overcome the previous "hollow force?" How long did it take?
10. If you think we are headed toward a "hollow force", what can we do about it? Either to prevent or to lessen impact?

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APPENDIX B

GENERAL MUNDY
COMMANDANT, U.S. MARINE CORPS

CONGRESSIONAL INSERT

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

HEARING ON: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY 1993 POSTURE STATEMENT

19 MAY 1993

QUESTION FOR THE RECORD

QUESTION NUMBER 4

Senator McCain: If you had to list the ten greatest risks you now face that you could end up with hollow forces by the end of the 1990s, what would these ten risks be?

General Mundy: The Marine Corps has no intention of becoming a hollow force. However, there are circumstances occasionally beyond our control which risk hollowing the force. Among these are:

- "fair share" resource reduction methods (based on historical percentages) which fail to recognize capabilities required in an uncertain world.
- judging the military on efficiency vice efficacy.
- continued drawdown of USMC force structure and lack of authorized and appropriated funds which do not permit maintaining an end strength of 177,000 Marines. Such conditions will force unrealistic and unsustainable OPTEMPO levels, resulting in decreased levels of training and readiness.
- failure to retain, modernize, and replace those Naval capabilities and platforms (such as our medium lift aircraft and the Navy's amphibious fleet) in adequate numbers required and agreed to, which permit effective response across the spectrum of world-wide crises.
- increases in level of humanitarian and peacekeeping / peacemaking missions and other contingencies such that our limited O&M funds are diverted from intended programs and Marines are diverted from combat training. The potential for this adverse situation presently exists as a result of insufficient Desert Storm and Restore Hope funding.
- continued high usage rate of our Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPF) without sufficient funds for regeneration and maintenance.
- overly optimistic savings estimates associated with various DoD mandated consolidations and business-like initiatives.
- continued escalation of mandatory environmental costs with no increase in funding, which would divert funds needed for maintaining readiness.
- lack of resources to replace aging infrastructure and to modernize the Marine Corps could cause maintenance costs to grow and readiness and interoperability to decrease.
- inability to retain and access the high caliber personnel presently in our quality force due to the combined effect of the above risks (particularly high OPTEMPO/PERSTEMPO rates).

APPENDIX C

ADMIRAL KELSO
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

CONGRESSIONAL INSERT

QUESTION 4: If you had to list the ten greatest risks you now face that you could end up with hollow forces by the end of the 1990s, what would these ten risks be?

ANSWER: The ten greatest risks we now face with respect to going hollow are:

1) Personnel Quantity - We must continue to have the flexibility to target overmanned communities and use the force shaping tools currently available, to compel the right personnel to leave the Navy.

2) Personnel Quality - We must be able to retain the right skill mixes and experience levels of personnel to man the force. Continued authorization to target SRB toward undermanned communities is central to our ability to retain the right skill mixes.

3) Inability to shutdown unneeded infrastructure (from previous and current BRAC).

4) Inability to maintain Op/Pers Tempo due to Unified CINC requirements.

5) Unwillingness by Congress to allow us to conduct planned force reductions.

6) Unreasonable budget assumptions such as inflation rate/exchange rates/DBOR payout, etc., which require O&M offsets in the year of implementation.

7) Training Funds - We must be able to send personnel to training courses, and operate units sufficiently to gain on-the-job training and exercise experience. Particularly important is the need to maintain sufficient ship steaming hours and aircraft flight hours.

8) Maintenance Spares - We must maintain proper service equipment, technical documentation, and available spare parts.

9) Maintenance Availability - We must ensure sufficient non-operational time to conduct necessary maintenance. Operational commitments must be reduced in consonance with force structure reductions in order to allow for necessary maintenance.

10) Logistics Stockpiles - We must provide timely spare parts and consumables to support operations and maintenance.

APPENDIX D

**GENERAL SULLIVAN
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY**

CONGRESSIONAL INSERT

INSERT FOR THE RECORD

HOUSE	APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE	HOUSE	ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE	HOUSE	OTHER
SENATE		X SENATE		SENATE	
HEARING DATE	TRANSCRIPT PAGE NO.	LINE NO.	INSERT NO.	FY 94 DoD Budget/ Army Posture	
May 93			4		

READINESS RISKS

Senator McCain. If you had to list the ten greatest risks you now face that you could end up with hollow forces by the end of the 1990s, what would these ten risks be?

General Sullivan. The greatest risks, not in priority are:

- Recruiting – Reduction in funding for recruiting, to include advertising will reduce quality of accessions.
- Missions/Unit Training – Total Operation and Maintenance, Army (OMA) per soldier is dropping dramatically over 36% (fiscal years (FY) 85-89 to FY 94).
- Infrastructure/Facilities – Our infrastructure is slowly deteriorating by inability to fund Real Property Maintenance, Army (RPMA). RPMA per soldier is dropping 33% resulting in a \$5.8 billion shortfall (FY 85-89 to FY 94). Facilities maintenance backlog has increased 13% from FY 93 to FY 94.
- Quality of Life – Inability to fund Base Operations (BASOPS) adequately results in reduced services (Quality of Life) and increased troop diversions. BASOPS per division has dropped 14% (FY 85-89 to FY 94).
- Sustainment – The availability of supplies will decrease as maintenance and supply funding per division has dropped 22% (FY 85-89 to FY 94).
- Equipment Readiness – Equipment readiness and equipment-on-hand will increasingly become a problem as funding for depot maintenance per division has dropped 38% (FY 85-89 to FY 94).
- Leader Training – We must protect our leadership development and training programs to ensure adequately trained leaders. This is a key lesson learned from all wars. We cannot accept risks in this area.
- Modernization – Funding for modernization in the last five years has decreased by over 50%. We risk placing a technologically inferior force on the battlefield if this trend continues.
- Missions Other Than War – Increased peacekeeping, humanitarian, and disaster relief missions drain limited resources in the year of execution causing reduced readiness.

APPENDIX E

GENERAL MCPEAK
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE

CONGRESSIONAL INSERT

HOUSE	APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE	HOUSE	ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE	HOUSE	OTHER
SENATE		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SENATE		SENATE	
HEARING DATE	TRANSCRIPT PAGE NO.	LINE NO.	INSERT NO.		
19 May 93			SS-03-004		

Ten Greatest Risks

Senator McCain: If you had to list the ten greatest risks you now face that you could end up with hollow forces by the end of the 1990's, what would these ten risks be?

General McPeak: I am concerned about everything associated with maintaining a combat ready force. We must maintain the correct balance between force structure, modernization, and force readiness to prevent a return to the hollow force of the late 70s. So providing a list of ten areas cannot be all inclusive, but here are some areas we are currently watching:

- Morale problems caused by eroding compensation and benefits for military members
- Decreasing flying hours and decreasing training funding
- Ineffective funding, procurement and management of spares, both Readiness Spares Packages and day-to-day spares
- Funding drain of maintaining excessive infrastructure
- Fiscally driven changes in the active/Air Reserve Component mix which would leave the force unable to meet short notice requirements and needed OPTEMPO for service and joint training
- Effects on training and warfighting as the military assumes more non-traditional tasks
- Drawdown not based on a specific strategy which may leave remaining force structure insufficient or inappropriate to implement a strategy
- Drain of experience and leadership in the rush to reduce personnel
- Non-programmatic cuts as method of choice to achieve reduced budgets
- Congressionally issued force structure or modernization not based on military requirements